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University of Montana grad student discovers new snail species in Flathead Lake

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NEWS

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brunell/js
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(state)

UM GRAD STUDENT DISCOVERS NEW SNAIL SPECIES IN FLATHEAD LAKE

Richard H. Russell, University of Montana zoology graduate student specializing in malacology, has discovered a new subspecies of mollusks and names it *Lymnaea stagnalis brunsoni* in honor of UM zoologist Dr. Royal Brunson.

Russell, a Missoula native, found the species in Flathead Lake near the UM Biological Station at Yellow Bay.

Russell said the closest relative to *Lymnaea stagnalis brunsoni* in the state of Montana is *Lymnaea stagnalis jugularas*, but it is not found in Flathead Lake. The *Lymnaea stagnalis brunsoni* is about one inch long while the *Lymnaea stagnalis jugularas* is about twice as large and has a more pointed shell. The *Lymnaea stagnalis*, in layman's terms, is a snail.

He said the new species has distinct shell characteristics and an anatomy of its own.

The species *Lymnaea stagnalis* was thought to have originated in Europe and migrated to North America by way of the Bering Land Bridge. Scientists believe it had been circumpolarly distributed southward.

Russell also said the remnant *Lymnaea stagnalis brunsoni* is a pre-glacial species while the *Lymnaea stagnalis jugularas* is a migrant of post-glacial times.

He has published his findings in the April, 1967 edition of the "Nautilus" which is the Pilsbry Quarterly devoted to the interests of conchologists.

Dr. Brunson, one of the leading malcologists in the United States, said it is very unusual for a student on the doctoral level to identify a new specimen and Russell accomplished it while working on his master's degree.

Russell has received a National Institute of Health Fellowship to the University of Michigan to work on his doctorate in zoology.